

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMCONSUL QUEBEC
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1094
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY
AMCONSUL MONTREAL
AMCONSUL TORONTO

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUEBEC 0324

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, CA
SUBJ: HOW COULD YOU GET INTO SUCH A MESS, RENE?

1. CONFRONTATION HAS DEVELOPED AT FORT CHIMO IN QUEBEC'S FAR NORTH BETWEEN INUIT TRIBESMEN AND QUEBEC AUTHORITIES. INUITS CLAIM GOQ HAS DECEIVED THEM IN NOT EXPLICITLY RECOGNIZING THEIR LINGUISTIC RIGHTS. THEY CONSIDER FACT THAT BILL 101 SIMPLY EXEMPTED THEM FROM PROVISIONS OF ACT AS VIOLATING PREVIOUS UNDERSTANDINGS INCLUDING JAMES BAY AGREEMENTS.

2. EARLY IN WEEK, INUITS TOLD QUEBEC TEACHERS TO LEAVE FORT CHIMO. COMPLIANT TEACHERS PULLED OUT, BUT GOQ SENT 25 MAN STRONG POLICE RIOT SQUAD TO "PROTECT GOVERNMENT PROPERTY." INUITS THEN TURNED OFF ELECTRICITY AND WATER TO ALL QUEBEC GOVERNMENT FACILITIES EXCEPT HOSPITAL AND ASKED POLICE TO LEAVE "BEFORE SOMETHING HAPPENS." IN STORMY MEETING BETWEEN POLICE OFFICER-IN-CHARGE AND INUIT LEADERS, CHARLIE WATT, PRESIDENT OF THE "NORTHERN QUEBEC INUIT ASSOCIATION," REPORTEDLY THREATENED INTERALIA INUIT SECESSION FROM QUEBEC IF QUEBEC SECEDES FROM CANADA.

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3. COMMENT: PROBABLY GREATEST THREAT INUITS POSE IS TO QUEBEC'S IMAGE OF ITSELF. PQ UNDER LEVESQUE HAS ALWAYS VIEWED ITSELF AS MODEL ADVOCATE OF SOCIAL DEMOCRACY AND CHAMPION OF AN ABUSED PEOPLE. THIS GENEROUS SELF-IMAGE MAY SUFFER NOW AS THEIR GOVERNMENT IS PLACED IN ROLE OF BULLY WHICH FAILS TO KEEP ITS WORD TO A POOR, DEFENSELESS, NATIVE PEOPLE. LEVESQUE RECOGNIZED THIS DANGER WHEN HE MADE FLYING TRIP TO NORTH EARLIER

IN SUMMER PROMISING NATIVE PEOPLE THEIR LINGUISTIC RIGHTS
WOULD BE RESPECTED. EVEN LAURIN SOFTENED STERN INQUISITORS
DEMEANOR TO REASSURE NATIVE PEOPLES OF GOVERNMENT'S BENEVOLENCE.
THUS, PRESENT CONFRONTATION COMES AS DEEP EMBARRASSMENT
WHICH MIGHT EVEN LEAD MORE QUEBECOIS TO QUESTION WISDOM OF
RIGID ATTITUDE ASSUMED BY GOQ ON WHOLE QUESTION OF LANGUAGE.
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